

## THE THIRD PARTY

By J. M. Price.

Lucy and I looked at each other when the lawyer came to that clause in Uncle Jabez's will. We did not look straight but out of the corners of our eyes. At least, I saw that Lucy was looking at me, and so I infer that she saw that I was looking at her. Then we each stared hard at the wall-paper.

"To my nephew, Arthur Bowen, the sum of fourteen thousand dollars

old fellow had written. "And to my niece, Lucy Stokes, the sum of thirty thousand dollars, to be held in trust for her for twenty years following my death, and the interest to be paid to the said Lucy Stokes quarterly, contingent upon her not marrying the said Arthur Bowen. And should the aforesaid legatees marry during that period the capital and property aforementioned shall revert to the person whose name is in the possession of my lawyer, Mr. Griffin Coleworth."

It did not run exactly in that way, but that was the sum and substance of it. And the point was that Lucy and I had never wanted to marry each other.

"I congratulate you both heartily," said Mr. Coleworth, when he had finished reading the will. He shook hands with us. "I presume that the contingency is not likely to press unduly hard upon either of you," he inquired blandly.

"No, indeed no," said Lucy haughtily. "I assure you that Mr. Bowen and I have always felt quite an aversion toward each other."

"Ye-es, indeed," I stammered. "The thought of a union had never entered our minds at all."

"Quite so—quite so," said Mr. Coleworth, rubbing his hands. And Lucy turned away and began talking to Mr. Jabez Stokes' housekeeper, who, attired in deepest mourning, was contentedly meditating upon her own ample legacy of fifteen thousand dollars.

As I have said, I had never given a thought to Lucy. My revered uncle—our revered uncle—had been a suspicious old man, and what is popularly known as a "killjoy." If he thought he had done us an ill turn he was grossly self-deceived. And yet—well, I had never noticed it before, strangely enough, but the way Lucy turned her head away was quite fascinating. Her dress became her remarkably, and she was—yes, positively pretty. If only Uncle Jabez



"Horrible!" I agreed.

and my property on Madison avenue, consisting of the apartment house known as "The Maple Vine," on condition that he shall not marry the said Lucy Stokes within a period of twenty years, the said property and capital to be held in trust for him during that period and the interest paid to him quarterly," the ferocious